

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGR-05 STR-04

FEA-01 OES-03 INT-05 SAM-01 SAJ-01 /115 W

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P R 300940Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1244

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTINE

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 8712

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LA, JA, VN, UR, US

SUBJECT: LAOS

REF: A. TOKYO 8545

B. TOKYO 8547 NOTAL

C. TOKYO 8478

VIENTINE MINIMIZE CONSIDERED

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SUMARY: DURING RECENT VISIT TO VIENTINE, FONOFF OFFICIAL (HANABUSA)

FOUND RUSSIANS SMUG AND PROMINENT BUT NORTH VIETNAMESE SEEM FIRMLY ENTRENCHED AS MENTORS OF THE PATHET LAO WHO NOW CONTROL LAO'S GOVERNMENT. DESPITE HARRASSMENT OF USMISSION, HANABUSA EXPRESSED HOPE CURRENT RADICALIZATION OF LAOS WOULD ABATE AND US WOULD SOMEHOW BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN ITS PRESENCE IN LAOS SINCE US-LAO RAPTURE WOULD EFFECTIVELY PLACE VIENTIENE COMPLETELY WITHIN THE COMMUNIST ORBIT. END SUMMARY.

1. RUSSIANS WERE LOLLING VIENTIENE'S HOTELS AS THOUGH THEIR DAY HAD COME BUT HANOI AT LEAST FOR MOMENT IS POWER BEHIND PATHET LAO IN RUNNING LAOS, ACCORDING TO ASSESSMENT GIVEN EMBOFF BT FONOFF FIRST SE ASIA DIVDIR HANABUSA. DURING JUNE 12-20 VISIT TO CIETNIENE TO NEGOTIATE WITH HANOI'S REPS (REF A), HANABUSA FOUND PATHET LAO TAKEOVER OF LAOS' GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE COMPLETE. EVEN PM PHOUMA IS SUBJECT TO PATHET LAO DECISION. EVIDENCE IS ABUNDANT HOWEVER THAT HANOI IS REALLY IN CHARGE. REPORTS FROM LAO COUNTRYSIDE, ESPECIALLY AROUND PAKSE AND SAVANNAKET, INDICATE HEAVY NORTH VIETNAMESE PRESENCE. MAINICHI REPORTER, WHOM HANABUSA REGARDS AS RELIABLE, TOLD HIM HE RECENTLY OBSERVED BUSLOADS OF LAO FROM SOUTHERN PANHANDLE ARRIVING IN DON HA, THE PORT IN QUANG TRI, SVN, FOR REVOLUTIONARY TRAINING BY NORTH VIETNAMESE CADRES.

2. RUSSIANS ARE HIGHLY VISIBLE IN VIENTIENE AND SEEM READY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF US SET-BACKS QUICKLY AND WITH VERVE. HANABUSA SUSPECTS THAT SOVIET ACTIVITY MAY SOON OFFEND LAO SENSITIVITIES BUT FOR MOMENT RUSSIANS ARE SMUG AND ASSERTIVE. CHINESE, IN CONTRAST, ARE HARDLY VISIBLE. FOR MOMENT, ACCORDING TO HANABUSA, BOTH CHINESE AND RUSSIANS ARE WELCOMED BY WIDE SPECTRUM OF LAO TO COUNTERBALANCE HEAVY NORTH VIETNAMESE PRESENCE. HANABUSA SAID PATHET LAO LEADERS ADMIT THIS AND ALSO CONFIDENT THAT RUSSIANS AND LEADERS, INCLUDING PATHET LAO, ACCORDING TO HANABUSA, ALSO STILL WANT TO RETAIN AN AMERICAN PRESENCE TO FURTHER DISPERSE EXTERNAL POWERS' INFLUENCE IN LAOS.

3. WHILE EXPRESSING SYMPATHY FOR PROVOCATIONS AGAINST US IN LAOS, HANABUSA MADE A PLEA THAT USG NOT DECIDE TOO HASTILY TO TERMINATE PARTICIPATION IN FEOF OR, EVEN WORSE, WUIT LAOS COMPLETELY. HE SURMISED FROM TALK IN VIENTIENE THAT THE USG MIGHT HAVE ALREADY MADE SUCH DECISION. EMBOFF RESPONDED THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT PRIVY TO WASHINGTON'S THINKING ON THE SUBJECT, HIS PERSONAL IMPRESSION WAS THAT WE HOPED TO RETAIN PRESENCE IN VIETNAM, WERE VERY APPREHENSIVE ABOUT PGNU'S ATTITUDE TOWARD US, BUT NEVERTHELESS, WERE WATCHING TO SEE HOW THE SITUATION DEVELOPS BEFORE MAKING FINAL DECISIONS ABOUT EITHER ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE OR OUR PRESENCE THERE. CONTINUING, HANABUSA COMMENTED THAT SHOULD THE US CEASE PARTICIPATION IN FEOF OTHER DONORS WOULD FOLLOW SUIT AND TE

LAO ECONOMY WOULD COLLAPSE IN SHORT ORDER. LESS DRASTICALLY, SHOULD THE US CUT ITS CONTRIBUTION JAPAN AND OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD DO THE SAME. THERE WOULD BE NO WAY HANABUSA SAID, FOR THE FONOFF TO SUCCESSFULLY JUSTIFY ANY OTHER COURSE TO THE FINANCE MINISTRY. HANABUSA EXPRESSED HOPE THE US COULD INCLUDE FUNDS IN BUDGET AND DECIDE LATER DEPENDING ON CONDITIONS WHETHER TO ACTUALLY DISPURSE FUNDS TO PGNU. FINALLY, HE CONCLUDED THAT US WITHDRAWL FROM FEOF AND CERTAINLY TOTAL RUPTURE BETWEEN US AND LAOS WOULD PRECLUDE ANY CHANCE OF MAINTINING NON-COMMUIST INFLUENCE IN THE COUNTRY, A DEVELOPMENT HE WULD ABHOR. A US-LAO BREAK COULD ALSO FURTHER ADVERSELY INFLUENCE THAILAND'S POSTURE.

4. COMMENT: RADICAL LEFTWARD SHIFT IN LAOS AND TOUGHER ATTITUDES TOWARD JAPAN IN SVN (REF C HEIGHTEN OFFICIAL JAPANESE CONCERN THAT NON-COMMUNIST INFLUENCE MIGHT BE SHUT OUT OF INDOCHINA ALTOGETHER. NEUTRALIST BUFFER ROLE JAPANES HOPED LAOS WOULD PLAY BETWEEN VIETNAM AND THAILAND ALSO APPEARSL JEOPARDIZED, COMPOUNDING JAPANESE ANXIETY ABOUT THAILAND'S FUTURE. TO KEEP GOJ ABREST, WE WOULD APPRECIATE BEING INCLUDED AS INFO ADDRESSEE ON ASSESSMENTS OF DEVELOPMENTS IN LAOS AND USG ATTITUDES TOWARD US RELATIONS WITH VIENTIENE.

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